



Faithful Walter.



Dexter Fernald's Book

Presented by his Father

E. Fernald



STORIES FOR CHILDHOOD.

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WENDELIN AND HER LADY-BUG.



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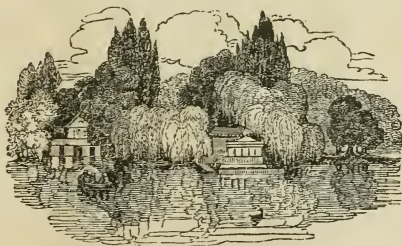
FAITHFUL WALTER,

AND

THE INCENDIARY.

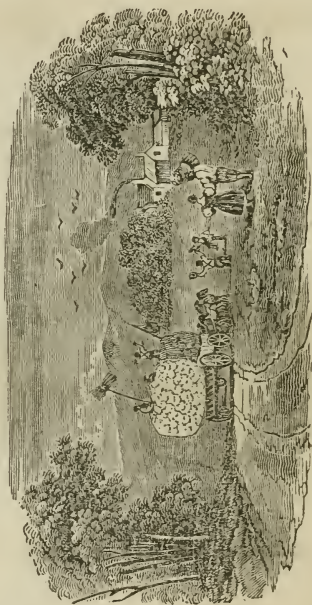
SHOWING

HOW DIVINE PROVIDENCE SOMETIMES ACCOMPLISHES GREAT
EVENTS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF CHILDREN.



SELECTED BY MRS. COLMAN.

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FAITHFUL WALTER.

CHAPTER I.

“How many hands will you have in the hay-field to-day?” said I, one morning at breakfast, to my host, farmer Trimmer, under whose roof I had been lodging for more than a twelvemonth.

“How many, sir?” replied the farmer; “why, as many as we can possibly muster, you may be sure; for I never in all my life had so much hay down together as I have just now. If we had but more hands, three days of this hot sun and lovely breeze would make it all safe for us. But the quicksilver is settling down this morning I see, so we can’t expect this fine weather to last many days longer. Well, we must work hard while we have it, and hope for the best. Let me see,—there will be seven of our own people, and those six new men I hired yesterday, and if you reckon nephew Walter, here, and myself to make one more between us, there will be fourteen all together.”

Now the farmer spoke very modestly of his own

powers, when he said this ; for though "Nephew Walter" was a slight-made lad of about thirteen, James Trimmer himself was a man of such unusual proportions and strength, that he could easily do as much work as any two of his laborers.

"Fourteen we shall be all together, and I wish we were *forty*," continued the farmer ; "but perhaps my good woman and the maids will come out and handle the forks by-and-by."

"Not we, indeed !" replied Mrs. Trimmer, "till we have finished our own work, at any rate. How are the victuals for fourteen hungry people to be got ready, if we go a haymaking, I should like to know ?"

"Then I shall be the only idle person on the premises," said I to myself ; "perhaps the only thoroughly idle, useless being within ten miles of us. To be sure I am not very strong, nor used to hard work ; but at haymaking-time anybody can be useful, and I could do as much as little Walter there, at any rate. Come, I will try to spend one day of my life usefully and industriously."

So, telling Mr. Trimmer that he had made a mistake in his reckoning, and that he would have one more haymaker in his employ than he expected, I accompanied him into the field, where, under the tuition of my friend Walter, I soon learned to perform my part very much to my own satisfaction.

Here I must introduce my young friend more particularly than by merely saying that he was James Trimmer's nephew. His father, a poor hard-working curate, preaching two or three sermons a week, and with difficulty maintaining his family upon an income which did not amount to the yearly earnings of a skilful journeyman tailor or shoemaker, had died when little Walter was about two years old. His wife soon followed her husband, and as she had offended her own family by her imprudent choice, poor Walter was left without a friend or protector in the wide world, except his uncle and aunt Trimmer. Now this early bereavement, unfortunate in most instances, had proved a blessing to the little boy; for which is the most enviable condition, that of a very poor curate's son, or of a thriving farmer's nephew and adopted child? It is true that as the former he would have had more right to the title of *gentleman*; but give me well-fed and warmly-clad respectability, rather than starving and half-ragged gentility. And I mean to show that Walter, though his working clothes were of coarse texture, and his shoes were often adorned by half a pound weight of hob-nails, had nevertheless principles and feelings that would have done honor to any station in life. Neither was he so deficient in learning as boys of his class usually are; for his uncle, wh

had received some education himself, was too sensible of the advantages he had derived from it, to neglect his nephew in this respect. So the long winter evenings were spent by Walter very pleasantly and profitably, in reading and writing, and in learning the first rules of arithmetic.

But after a few years' instruction there followed a consequence which the farmer had himself foreseen, and had predicted to his wife very soon after he had taken upon himself the office of tutor to his nephew. The intelligent child had imbibed all the learning the teacher had it in his power to impart, *and longed for more.*

At this crisis, when Mr. and Mrs. Trimmer were debating whether they could make up their minds to part with their nephew, and send him for a year or two to a school in the neighboring town, I first became an inmate of their comfortable abode. Compelled by ill health to give up my profession, and to take refuge in the genial climate of our southern coast, I had spent several weeks in rambling about, seeking for a quiet resting-place, and finding none exactly suited to my wishes. One place was too public, another too lonely and out of the world, even for such a lover of retirement as myself; and many situations, though agreeable in other respects, were far too expensive for my very slender income.

One afternoon, during my uncertain wanderings, as I was sitting on a stile, contemplating a glorious ocean-view, and inhaling with delight the perfumed sea-breeze that blew softly over the land, I was startled from my musings by a voice behind me, very civilly requesting permission to pass by. I stepped aside to comply, and then my acquaintance with little Walter Trimmer commenced.

There was something wonderfully engaging in the boy's manner and appearance. Though not absolutely handsome, the expression of his face combined so much intelligence with the greatest simplicity and innocence, that the absence of perfect beauty and regularity of feature was forgotten. His was a face on which the finger of the Creator had written, in characters not to be misunderstood, "Trust me, try me ; *I cannot* deceive you."

As in our pilgrimage through this world of deceit and treachery, such a perfectly ingenuous countenance as I have attempted to describe does not often refresh our sight, I determined to make an acquaintance with its owner, and accordingly I entered into conversation with Walter, who soon became very sociable and communicative. He showed me, at the distance of about half-a-mile, the chimneys of his uncle's house, peeping up behind a forest of apple-trees, and as it lay nearly in my way to the little village where I lodged, I

determined to accompany my new acquaintance there. I asked Walter if he thought his aunt would spare me a little milk.

"Yes, I am *sure* she will, sir," replied he; "and you can have it fresh and warm from the cow, for it is just about milking-time. Or, if you like it better, aunt will give you a glass of ale, or of cider. Oh, such capital cider we make, sir! Uncle often says that ours is the very best cider in all Devonshire. Aunt always gives me a good large cup full with my supper: aunt is very kind to me, sir; oh, so kind! and I am sure she will be glad to give *you* anything to eat or drink you like. Only I must tell you one thing; you must not do what some very fine grand ladies did a little while ago."

Here my little talkative friend paused, and looked rather confused; so I enquired what these fine grand ladies had been guilty of.

"Why, they came as you are going to do now, sir," replied Walter, "and asked for some milk; and aunt gave them some, of course and some bread and butter, and some honey; and what do you think they did, sir, when they were going away? Why, they wanted *to pay for it!* I declare, aunt looked downright angry. Her face was as red as fire with anger; and I never in all my life saw her so but once before, and that was when she caught our boy Joe tying a squib to the cat's

tail. However, she managed to keep quiet till the ladies were outside of the door, and then she said, so loudly, that I am pretty sure they heard her, 'When I keep a public house I'll hang out a sign!'"

I promised Walter that I would not imitate the conduct of these offending ladies; and now, crossing a winding, narrow pond or moat, by a bridge formed by a prostrate willow tree, we passed through a long avenue of magnificent hollyhocks, and entered the house. My conductor showed me into a small, neatly-furnished parlor, and went to call his aunt. As they came along the passage, I could not help overhearing Walter's description of his new acquaintance. "He is so pale and thin and walks so slowly!"

I beheld in Mrs. Trimmer the personification of neatness and good order. Her round plump face was so radiant with benevolence and kindness, that I could easily believe it would become "as red as fire with anger," at the sight of Joe's naughty pyrotechnic experiment, or of any other act of inhumanity towards man or beast. Perhaps my sickly appearance and Walter's account of my weakness interested the good woman's compassionate feelings in my favor, for she received me with the most winning kindness, and with genuine rustic good breed-

ing. Walter was immediately despatched into the field for a refreshing draught of new milk.

As some excuse for my intrusion, I asked Mrs. Trimmer if she knew any person in the neighborhood who had comfortable lodgings to let. She replied that there were no *regular* lodging-houses in or near the village; but that she and her husband had been thinking of taking a lodger, if they could meet with one who would be content with humble accommodations and plain fare. As she said this, she looked doubtfully, first at the low ceiling and simple furniture of the little parlor, and then at myself. No doubt she came to the conclusion that the *man* and the *apartment* were not very unsuitable for each other, for she added:—"If you, sir, would like to try our lodgings for a few weeks, and could put up with our plain farm-house victuals, I'm sure I would do my best to make you comfortable, and so would my good man, for that matter."

So I *did* try Mrs. Trimmer's lodgings for a month or two, and liked my quarters and my entertainers so well, that I became a yearly, instead of a weekly boarder. As for "the plain farm-house victuals," I envy not the man who could not be content with the substantial, wholesome meals Mrs. Trimmer provided for her family. And to one who, like myself, had never before tasted anything more genuine than London "sky-blue," an unlimited supply of

the richest milk and cream was a delicious novelty; neither must I omit to praise the "best cider in all Devonshire," which well deserved the name of "*apple-wine*," as the good farmer delighted to call it.

Walter and I soon became fast friends; and the plan of sending him to a school was joyfully abandoned by his uncle and aunt, when I told them that it would be a pleasure to me to devote an hour or two in the day to his instruction. Had I not in this manner been the means of altering my young friend's destination, I would not have obtruded so insignificant a personage as myself upon the reader's notice, for I had rather be Walter's historian than my own. Let us return to the hay-field.



CHAPTER II.

THE scene of our labors was a large field, on the side of a very gently-rising ground, close to the house. Here the whole of Mr. Trimmer's haymaking force was assembled ; for the mowers had but just finished their part of the work, and the farmer was anxious that the very heavy crop of grass should be spread abroad to the sun and wind as soon as possible.

Among the additional hay-makers hired the day before, I could not help noticing a man of the most repulsive and unearthly aspect imaginable. With prodigiously long legs and arms, he would have been as tall a man as Mr. Trimmer, if nature or an accident had not crooked his spine, and shortened his body to about half its proper proportions. But how can I describe his countenance ? This was so fearfully distorted, and the nose and mouth were thrust so much to one side, that his only remaining eye, which gleamed like a burning coal, really appeared to be placed nearly in the middle of his face.

" That's *Polyphemus*, sir ! " whispered Water to me, remembering the description of the King of the Cyclops, in one of my books, which he had lately been reading. I found, on inquiry, that this man

had out lately appeared in the neighborhood, and that very little was known about him, except that his name was Joe Brindle, and that he had several times given proof that his disposition was as savage as his appearance. Some incendiary misdeeds of his were also talked about, and I was surprised that the farmer would employ such a man. "Why, sir, I believe he's a bad fellow," said he; "but he is a capital hand for the work; only see how famously he tosses his fork about, with those long arms of his! I don't much like the man, but when laborers are scarce, we must not look too closely at them. At haymaking-time we are glad to get anybody."

For more than two hours, I continued using my fork very steadily, following "in the wake," as sailors say, of Walter and his uncle, for the sake of an occasional word of instruction or encouragement. But before noon I was compelled to give up; though very desirous of making a whole day's work of it, the unusual exertion, and the intense heat of the sun, entirely exhausted my small measure of strength, and made me retreat to a shady corner at the upper end of the field, where, reposing on the grass, I contemplated the busy scene before me.

I do not believe that I slept, because between the undoubted reality of the scene and the visionary character of what followed there was the most perfect connection, without a moment's forgetfulness.

The fearful and fiery appearances that troubled my sight, were, no doubt, the delirious imaginings of a brain half roasted by an unusual exposure to the fierce heat of the sun. I am convinced that I was suffering from a slight "coup de soleil;" but it is not easy to understand why the events that really took place soon afterwards, should have been in some measure foreshown in this vision, or trance, or whatever the reader may please to call it.

I continued gazing at the busy group of hay-makers, slowly moving, in two zigzag ranks, across the field. One body was headed by the stout farmer, followed by his nephew and his servants; and the other rank was composed of the six strangers, including "Polyphemus." For some time everything went on very quietly and orderly. Presently Walter began to appear fidgety and uneasy; and at last he said to Mr. Trimmer:

"Uncle! uncle James! I am *sure* it is so. I saw it then quite plainly: only look when he passes us again."

"Nonsense, lad! thou art dreaming, or if it *did* smoke a little, it was from the heat of this burning sun, I suppose: I am half on fire myself."

"But why should it smoke and crackle, when *he* treads upon it? Oh, frightful! Look at his shoes, uncle! Only look at the bottoms of his shoes, when he lifts his feet up."

"I say, master," said Parsons, the farmer's head man, coming up close to him, and speaking in a mysterious tone ; " Master, I don't like that Brindle's way of making hay at all ! Don't ye see how it *smokes* when he kicks it about with his feet, in that strange fashion : depend upon it, there 's something wrong about that fellow :—look at his shoes, master !—look at those great iron heels on his shoes !"

"Ha, well, they *do* look as if they were rather hot, to be sure. But this sun dazzles my eyes so. Well, well, as I told Mr. Ernest this morning, when men are scarce we must n't look at them too closely, for at these times we are glad of anybody. Come, my lads, keep moving."

Parsons fell back into his place, but appeared dissatisfied ; and I determined, notwithstanding the farmer's advice, to *look very closely indeed* at Polyphemus and his extraordinary method of making hay. Walter and Parsons were right. The green grass certainly smoked and fizzed, under the long-legged monster's feet ; and when he passed near me, I saw with horror that the large iron heels of his shoes were not merely red-hot, but absolutely glowing and sparkling with intensity of heat. Presently, a lock of hay, which, in his strange antics, he had kicked aloft into the air, actually took fire, and before it reached the ground, was entirely consumed.

“Hallo! Brindle!” exclaimed the farmer, who now seemed convinced that mischief was in the wind; “I say, Brindle, let us have no more of that; do you hear?—I can’t afford to have my hay wasted in that way.”

“I can’t help it,” replied he of the fiery heel, in a voice that sounded like the lower notes of an ill-played bassoon. “’Tisn’t *my* fault, I tell you. The foolish shoemaker *would* put upon these shoes, iron heels that had been made by some new-fangled machine or other. I told him that mischief would come of it, for all machines are inventions of Satan, and they *will* do their master’s work in some way or other. No wonder these heels are hot, though they were made a twelvemonth ago! Confusion to the inventors of all machines and contrivances for taking the bread out of the poor man’s mouth!”

“Well, that beats everything!” said the farmer. “What does he say? Iron keep hot for a twelvemonth! Well, well, it may be so, though it *does* seem odd, to be sure: we have got something to learn yet, nephew Walter; but we’ll ask Mr. Ernest all about it, this evening. But as for those queer shoes of yours, Brindle, I can’t have my hay burnt up, you know. So just run down to that pond, at the bottom of the field, and try if *water* won’t cool those smoking heels; do ye hear?”

The man obeyed, muttering a fresh malediction

upon all machines and their inventors, while the farmer and his men stood leaning on their forks, waiting to see what would take place upon the meeting of the two adverse elements, fire and water. The result was sufficiently extraordinary to have gratified any lover of the marvellous, who had witnessed it. When he reached the pond or moat, which separated the field from the garden, the man-monster seated himself astride on the willow-tree bridge, with his long legs hanging down on each side. The instant his feet touched the water, there was heard a noise like the roaring of a thousand sky-rockets, and such a dense volume of steam rose up, that the machine-hater was almost entirely concealed by it. At times, however, when the breeze blew this curtain of vapor aside, he might be seen swinging his arms and legs about, after his own extraordinary manner, while his demoniac laugh mingled with the roar of the boiling cauldron beneath him. Words, also, of strange and fearful import were heard :

“Fire, fierce and inextinguishable ! The torch of revenge to his roof, and the sharp knife to his throat, of the man who shall dare to cheat the laborer of his hire !”

“Impertinent fellow !” said Mr. Trimmer, “what does he mean ? But I wish we had never sent him down to the pond, for he’ll soon make the water so

hot that all the eels will be killed. Poor things! I fancy they are beginning to perspire in their holes already."

"And the water-cresses!" cried Walter,—“the water-cresses that aunt is so fond of having with her supper! They will all be spoilt. Only think of that, uncle!"

"And worse than that, master," said Parsons, "ten times worse than that; all the pretty little tadpoles will be boiled to a jelly, and made into frog-broth, poor things!"

"Shameful!" exclaimed the farmer. "I can't bear that. I am a peaceable man, but I *will* protect the tadpoles! Their poor mothers, the frogs, laid their eggs in my pond, with the understanding that the water should always be kept cool and comfortable for their children. 'T is what they call a '*breach of confidence*,' nephew Walter, and whoever is guilty of that don't deserve the name of an Englishman. Follow me, my men, and we'll soon drive this fiery-footed fellow out of the parish."

So the whole company, with the indignant farmer at their head, rushed down to the moat with their hay-forks in their hands. Brindle was prepared for the attack. As the formidable body of pikemen approached, gathering up his long legs under him, with a tremendous spring he leaped far over the head of the foremost man, who had made an unsuc-

cessful thrust at him with his fork, and away up the field the monster ran with the speed of a greyhound. And now the chase commenced in earnest. In hopes of surrounding the enemy, the farmer and his men dispersed themselves over the field, shouting to each other, "Brindle with the fiery heel! After him! Down with him! Death to the incendiary!"

The monster's method of progression was singular. It was neither running, nor leaping, nor flying over the ground, but a fearful and supernatural *rolling*! Stretching out his long arms and legs, he became an animated wheel, of which his shortened body formed the nave; and as it revolved with extreme rapidity, a rim was supplied by a bright band of fire and sparks proceeding from the glowing heels.

What chance had human pursuers of overtaking such a demon-wheel as this? None whatever; and they soon wished that they had not disturbed him from his seat on the bridge, for the incendiary's evil intentions were now but too apparent. As the rolling monster coursed rapidly up and down the field, he seemed to be trying to imitate the action of a haymaking machine, his arms and legs seizing the grass in his course and throwing it aloft in the air. *Like* a haymaking machine, but with a *difference*! for instead of suffering the hay thus tossed up

to fall quietly on the ground behind it, this fearful machine *set it in a blaze*, and its destructive course was marked by a long train of fire and smoke. Breathless with running, the farmer and his men ceased from the hopeless pursuit, and stood in a corner of the field, contemplating with dismay the progress of the incendiary.

“ ’T is the best crop of hay I ever cut in my life,” exclaimed the poor farmer ; “ and this villain won’t leave us a single blade of it.”

“ And worse still, master,” said Parsons ; “ ten thousand times worse than that!—the pond is all dried up, and the tadpoles are left half dead on the mud. And as for the eels, I don’t believe there’s a lively one among them all. I asked one great creature, as big as my arm, who was lying with his head out of his hole, how he felt himself after his hot bath. Says the eel to me, ‘ Parsons, I am ruined!—I’m boiled, I declare ! The cook that skins me won’t have much trouble with the job. She need n’t put any sand upon her hands ! I can’t move an inch out of my hole, for fear I should leave my skin behind me. If I don’t sue that Brindle for damages at the next sessions, may I be broiled and eaten alive ! ’ ”

The incidents of my vision now became still more confused and extravagant. Walter declared that, if nobody else would stop the progress of the

fiery-wheel, he would try what *he* could do. Placing himself in the monster's way, he was immediately dashed to the ground, and arose with a torrent of blood flowing from his temples.

"That's just what I wanted," said he; "there's nothing like blood for quenching fire. 'Tis better than an ocean of water."

Then I saw that he also became a wheel, spouting forth a crimson torrent instead of fire; and as he followed close in the track of the other, the train of flame and sparks was quenched, till at length the discomfited incendiary demon, finding he could do no more mischief, rolled himself out of the field, and I saw him no more. But in the reverberations of a terrible thunder-clap, which burst over head at the instant he disappeared, I could distinguish the words, "Confusion!—Outwitted by a powerless child!"

* * * * *

I found myself lying on the grass, surrounded by the farmer and several of his men. Walter was kneeling by my side.

"Don't drop the blood upon my face!" said I to the boy.

"Blood, Mr. Ernest! 'Tis water; we found you in a fainting fit, and uncle said that bathing your face would be the best way to bring you round again."

"Where did you get the water from, Walter?"

"Out of the moat, sir. It is not very clean, to be sure, but it was the nearest I could find."

"Then Brindle has *not* dried up the water, after all! And the tadpoles and the eels, eh, Walter, are they all well and comfortable?"

The boy laughed, and one of the men whispered to his companions, "The gentleman has been making free with that cider keg, I am thinking, and the liquor has been rather too strong for him."

"Come, sir," said the farmer, "take hold of my arm, and let us go into the house. The work and the heat have been too much for you. I never felt such a roasting sun in all my life. You must lie down on the bed for an hour or two, and you will soon be better."

I took Mr. Trimmer's advice, and after a sound sleep of some hours, I awoke with no remains of my sun-stroke but a slight head-ache. I said nothing about the strange spectral illusions of the hay-field; but when closely questioned by Walter on the subject, I told him I had been in a kind of a trance. However, I assured my friends, that I had not been "making free with the cider-keg."

CHAPTER III.

I MISSED the farmer at breakfast the next morning, and found, on inquiry, that he had mounted his horse soon after day-break, and had galloped off, without saying whither he was bound, or upon what errand. He returned before we had finished our meal, and Mrs. Trimmer enquired if he had been to seek for more haymakers.

"Yes, I have, sure enough," replied he; "and I have found one, and hired him; and a famous good hand he is too."

"One haymaker, indeed! well, to be sure, one is just better than none at all; but I was in hopes you would have brought back twenty."

"But the one I *have* hired will do the work of any twenty haymakers in the country; aye, and do it better than they would, into the bargain."

"The man is dreaming!" cried the dame.

"Uncle has been in a trance, like you were yesterday, Mr. Ernest," said Walter, slyly looking at me.

"Hold your tongues, wife and nephew, and I'll tell you all about it. As I lay awake last night, thinking how we should manage to get in our hay without more hands, all of a sudden it popped into

my head that Squire Thornley had got a *haymaking machine*. Said I to myself, 'They are earlier down in that warm bottom than we are here, by a week or more; and I dare say the squire has got all his hay in by this time. I'll ride over tomorrow, and ask him to lend me the machine for a day or two, and then a fig for these haymakers.' Well, I rode over to the squire's, and found that he was in bed, and that he wouldn't be down for an hour or more. Thinks I to myself, 'There's no time to be lost. He is a kind-hearted gentleman, and one that won't take offence when none is intended, and he has seen enough of farming business himself to know what it is to be in trouble for want of hands. I'll venture to disturb him from his nap.' So I wrote a bit of a note, and got his man to take it up to him. Well, in a minute or two, down comes my note again, and on the back the good gentleman had written with a pencil, 'Yes, and welcome.' So that's the clever haymaker I have engaged, and in half-an-hour he will be here. Well, my good woman, what now? I think you don't look altogether pleased about it."

"No, I never *am* pleased when I hear of these new machines, whether for haymaking, or thrashing, or what not. My father and his father before him would never use anything of the kind, and they were the best farmers in all the county. Ah

Mr. Ernest, you may smile, but depend upon it, sir, these machines will be the ruin of the country, in spite of what that book you were talking about may say to the contrary."

Mrs. Trimmer alluded to a very clever little work, called "The Results of Machinery," which had been sent to me in a packet of other literary food, by a kind friend in London.

"Aunt will never agree with the man who wrote that book," said Walter; "and yet she uses machines every day of her life."

"That's right, Walter," said Mr. Trimmer. "That's a good boy; see if you can bring your aunt round to our way of thinking. For my part, I am too busy eating to do anything but listen to you. Now, wife, it is your turn; Walter says you use machines."

"*I* use a machine! no, never. I think *you* must be in a trance now, Walter."

"Well, aunt, I am sure that *barrel-churn* of yours is a machine, and so are all churns. Only fancy how cross Sally, the dairymaid, would be, if you were to tell her that she must never use a churn."

"But she could n't make butter without some sort of a churn, Walter."

"I think she might, aunt. If she was to take a whisk, and beat the cream about for half a day, I

am pretty sure the butter would come at last. But stop, she must not use a whisk, for that is a sort of a machine too. So the only thing she could do, would be to thrust those great red arms of hers into the cream, and work them about till she was tired. Ha! ha! I think butter would soon be half-a-crown a pound, if people were obliged to make it that way."

"Well, then, I suppose we *must* have a churn, that's all. But I never heard it said that butter was made by machinery before. However, churns have been used these hundreds of years, that's one comfort, and 't is these new-fangled machines that I dislike."

"Capital! there's one point gained. Now, nephew Walter, now!" cried the farmer.

"Then, aunt, there is that patent cheese-press, that uncle bought at farmer Bright's sale, last winter. I am sure that is a machine, and quite a *new-fangled* one too. You must turn that out of the dairy, aunt, and press the cheeses with a board and some heavy stones laid upon it. But I suppose the author of 'The Results of Machinery,' would say that the board and stones were machinery too. So then the dairy-maids must *sit* upon the cheeses day and night, like so many brood-hens hatching their eggs, till they were pressed dry enough. What a number of dairy-maids you must have, aunt! and

only fancy a row of about a dozen of them, all sitting on their eggs—on their cheeses, I mean !”

“What nonsense the boy is talking !”

“Then there is the winch and chain at the well, that’s another machine, aunt ; and the smoke-jack, and the chaff-cutter, and the ——”

“Walter,” interrupted the farmer, “cut me one more slice of bacon, and then I shall do till dinner-time.”

“I can’t, uncle !” said the boy, with a roguish look at Mrs. Trimmer. “A *knife* is a sort of a machine, and aunt will be angry if I use one. Shall I tear off a piece of bacon with my fingers, aunt ?”

“My patience !” cried the good dame, rising up from the table ; “this boy is getting a great deal too learned for me. I must go and see after those lazy maids of mine.”

“And I must go and see after my new haymaker,” said the farmer ; “*he* isn’t lazy, at any rate.”

In a short time this new haymaker arrived, and was immediately put to work in the field ; and though I had no wish for another sun-stroke, with its accompanying fiery vision, I could not help going out for a short time, to witness its performance. To those who have never seen a haymaking machine, a short description may be necessary.

The principal part was a long barrel, or roller

covered with iron spikes, and mounted on a low strong carriage, running on two wheels, which were connected with the spiked roller by wheel-work. But it was so contrived that, when the wheels turned round, the roller revolved much faster than they did, and it was placed at such a height that the iron spikes almost touched the ground.

This clever haymaker did its work beautifully. The machine was drawn slowly over the field by horses, and as the roller revolved, the spikes caught up the hay, throwing it aloft in a finely divided shower, so that every blade of grass was separated, and exposed to the drying influences. Walter, who had never seen a haymaking machine before, was in ecstasies. As he examined the hay deposited on the ground behind the machine, he exclaimed, "Look, uncle ! only look how beautifully it spreads it about ! I *do* hope that aunt will come out by-and-by, and see it. Huzza ! machinery forever ! But there is aunt, I declare, feeding the ducks in the moat ; when she turns round this way again I'll wave my hat to her. Now she sees us ! Ah, and she shakes her head too ; she doesn't like machinery yet, uncle James."

And there were some others present who held the same opinions as Mrs. Trimmer. There was some low grumbling and angry looks among the

newly-hired men ; and a circumstance soon occurred which proved that there was at least one determined enemy to machinery in the field that day. For presently, those who were near the machine were alarmed by a loud crash, while at the same instant a hay-fork was tossed up into the air by the roller, and Walter narrowly escaped being impaled by it, as it fell to the ground. Fortunately the machine was but little injured. Some of the spikes were bent out of their places, but the smith could easily set them to rights in the evening, and in the mean time the machine would perform its work very nearly as well as before.

“ Master,” said Parsons in a whisper to the farmer—“ I say, master, that fork was put in the way on purpose. If it was n’t, I’ll eat it for dinner, iron and all. I am *sure* ’t was hid under the hay on purpose ; for I was walking just before the horses, and I must have seen it, if it had not been covered up. Take my word for it, master, that Brindle is the man that did it.”

“ Likely enough,” replied the farmer ; “ likely enough, Parsons ; but we can’t *prove* it, you know. However, I wish we had never hired him.”

“ Uncle,” said Walter, who had been examining the handle of the fork, “ just look here, uncle ! ”

“ Well, lad, I see nothing there, but the marks of the teeth of the machine.”

“It is n’t those marks I mean, but just here, and here again, there are spots of blood, and they are hardly dry yet. The man that used this fork last has hurt his hand ; and I think you may find him out that way, for nobody has touched it besides myself, since the machine threw it up. I have no cut on *my* hands, have I, uncle ?”

“That will do the business for us, I declare ! so call all the men together, Parsons, and make them stand in a row. Well done, nephew Walter ! that was a lucky thought : we shall find the rogue out this way, I do believe.”

When the men were all assembled, the farmer addressed them.

“Now, my men,” said he, “I don’t want to accuse any of you of playing this shabby trick, but somebody must have done it, you know. Now, then, listen to me. If any man has a mind to confess that he put that fork under the hay, let him step forward and beg pardon ; but all of you that declare you know nothing about it, hold up both your hands !”

“I was sure of it !—Thee art the man !”—cried Parsons, suddenly flying at Polyphemus, and grasping him by the throat. “Take hold of his arm, master ! make him show his hand again. There ! ’T is all bloody, you see. Oh, thou villain !”

Notwithstanding the strong testimony of the

bleeding hand, Brindle sulkily denied that he was the offender. And, after a little consideration, Mr. Trimmer came to the conclusion, that if he were to take the man before the squire, besides losing much valuable time, he should find it difficult to *prove* that he laid the fork under the hay with an evil intention. Parsons and some of the men proposed a ducking in the moat, but the farmer would not allow it; so all the punishment Brindle received was instant dismissal, without his wages.

He departed, grumbling like an enraged bear, and one of the men declared he heard the words—"hear of me again before you die!"

"What dost say?" exclaimed the indignant Parsons, "hear of thee again!—Likely enough!—For my part, I hope to hear of thee swinging on a gallows, before long. Master, we must look sharp, or he'll do us a mischief one of these days. I've heard say that Joe Brindle, or 'Polly Famous,' as master Walter calls him, has been *famous*, sure enough, for these sort of doings, before now."



CHAPTER IV.

IN three days after the dismissal of Brindle, by the valuable assistance of the machine, and by the greatest exertions on the part of men and horses, Mr. Trimmer's hay was all secured, and deposited in the rick-yard, in the form of three prodigious haymows. Not four hours after the last load had been brought home, the rain, which had been threatening all day, began to descend, first, in a light, almost invisible mist, increasing by degrees to a heavy, downright deluge.

The farmer stood at the window, contemplating his haymows, safe under the shelter of the tarpaulins, and prophesying that the wet weather would last for a week at least. I was surprised to observe that he was in an unusually grave and meditative mood. When I congratulated him on his good fortune, he said :

“ Better than I deserve, sir ! Far better than I deserve ; for I am ashamed to say that I have grumbled a little sometimes when it has pleased God to send us such weather as this before the crops were secured. Mr. Ernest, I have been trying to think *how I should have felt*, and *what I should have said*, if this rain had come yesterday ! Ah ! I am not

half so patient and grateful as my poor father was ! *He* never complained of too much rain, or too much drought, ‘for,’ said he, ‘what is bad for one crop may be good for another.’ I remember once, when I was a boy, father had got his hay in that very field we have been working in to-day, all beautifully made, without a drop of wet upon it, and they were just going to begin to carry it home, when all of a sudden a storm came up over the water, down came the rain, five times harder than it does now, and in ten minutes every bit of hay was entirely soaked. Well, sir, father came into this very room, (I remember I was sitting by the fire at the time, for I was just out of the measles,) he came in smiling and cheerful, and as he took off his dripping wet coat, he said to me, ‘Ah, Jemmy, my boy ! this is a lovely rain for the turnips !’* That was five and thirty long years ago, Mr. Ernest, but I have n’t forgotten it yet. Well, my good dame,” continued the farmer to his wife, who just then entered the room—“well, what dost say to it now ?”

“Say to what, I should like to know ?”

“Why, to this change of weather, and to our good luck in getting every bit of our hay in just in time.”

“Well, I say I am heartily glad of it, sure enough.”

* A fact.

"But, aunt, this is one of '*the results of machinery*,'" said Walter.

"True enough, boy," replied his uncle; "for without the help of that machine, our hay, instead of being snug under shelter there, would be lying abroad, soaking and spoiling in this rain. Now, my good woman, confess! Machinery is n't such a bad thing as you thought, is it?"

"Why, if no more harm came of it than this hay-making machine has done just now, I would n't complain. But I have heard of poor people being thrown out of work and half-starved by some of these new schemes. *That's* the sort of machinery I don't like."

"Now, nephew Walter," said the farmer, "come, you shall go on with it, for I am getting out of my depth. But you have read the book through from beginning to end. Now, then, what have ye got to say to that?"

"Why, aunt, the author of the book says that—but Mr. Ernest can explain it a thousand times better than I can."

I told Walter that I should much rather hear him go on with the argument himself; so he continued:

"He says that, whenever a machine is invented to do any sort of work quicker than it could be done by hand, it generally happens that a good many

people who used to get their bread by working at that trade, lose their employment, and of course that seems a bad thing. But then this new machine, suppose 't is a machine for weaving cloth, makes it so much cheaper than it could be done by hand, that people can buy three or four times as much for their money as they did before. So there's more good than harm done, you see, aunt. Then, by-and-by, such a quantity of this cheap cloth, or whatever the thing may be, is used, that there are more people wanted to manage the machines than ever worked at that trade before they were invented. So nobody need complain."

As Walter paused in his harangue, I whispered to him a single word, which started him off again directly.

"Thank you, sir ! I had forgotten all about that Aunt, how would you like that all the books in the world should be burnt, Bibles and all, and that nobody should be allowed to print any more ?"

"Why, I should not like it at all, Walter. What is the boy talking about now ?"

"Well, aunt, before the machine they call a *printing press* was invented, every book was obliged to be written with a pen, and there were a great many people who got their living entirely by copying books ; so you may be sure they were very dear at that time. But when the printing machine was

invented, these copying people complained sadly, because they had nothing more to do, for the printed books were much neater than the written ones, and didn't cost half a quarter as much. So almost everybody that could read bought some books, and then they taught their children to read too, and more books were wanted for them. And though the poor copiers lost their employment at first, I dare say they soon learned to be printers, for so many books were wanted that the printing machines could find work for them all, and for a great many more people besides."

"Well, boy," replied Mrs. Trimmer, "I hope 't is all for the best, but I can't argue with thee. If father was alive though, I think *he* would answer thee or the man that wrote that famous book either. *He* would soon drive you up into a corner, depend upon it. But come, I want thee to stop up a rat-hole for me in the fowl-house, for the vermin got in last night and sucked half a dozen eggs."

"Uncle is going to buy me a *rat-catching machine*," said the boy, following his aunt, laughing; "and I am to have a penny apiece for all the rats I catch. But if our poor cats could speak, I dare say they would say that it was very unfair to do their work for them by machinery."

For several weeks after this discussion, nothing worth recording took place at the farm, except that

Walter's rat-catching machine, otherwise a common gin, was procured from the town, and soon gained a very agreeable addition of pocket-money for its owner. But at length a circumstance occurred which gave Walter a good deal of uneasiness. He generally set his gin in the barn at night, and paid his last visit to it just before he went to bed; but one morning, instead of seeing his usual pennyworth dead in its close embrace, he was shocked to find a mangled leg remaining in the gin, the poor animal to whom it had belonged having made its escape. Now my young friend had one good quality, which, I grieve to say, is very rare indeed with boys of his class. Walter Trimmer was exceedingly humane and kind-hearted. Therefore, when he considered what suffering he had been the means of inflicting upon this poor rat, he determined never again to set his gin at night, and in the daytime only when he could have an opportunity of visiting it frequently. This resolution proved that his humane feelings were powerful and unfeigned, for by adhering to it he would lose a great part both of his profits and amusement. For Walter, like other boys of his age, (and like many grown-up boys also,) took great delight in rat-catching, which he esteemed a very noble and interesting sport. To those who are not of his opinion, and who may think that too much has already been said on this

subject, I must apologize, by reminding them that important events often arise from small and insignificant causes; and so it was in this instance. To preserve the regularity of the story, I shall relate the events that followed in the order in which they occurred, not as they came to my knowledge.

One night, after Walter was in bed, he suddenly remembered he had omitted to pay his usual visit to his gin before he retired to rest, and that it still remained set in one of the barns. What should he do? He could not sleep comfortably with the idea that, owing to his neglect, it was quite possible that an unfortunate rat might be caught, and be compelled to endure the pain of a broken leg till the morning. Then, on the other hand, it was a dismally wet, blowing night, and the barn was a considerable distance from the house. To some boys, the mere idea of going out alone in the dark would have had its terrors, but Walter had no superstitious fears, and he was constantly in the habit of wandering about the premises by himself at night.

For some time the boy endeavored to silence the promptings of humanity, by thinking, that of all the rats he had ever caught, there was only one that had not been put out of its pain instantly, and it was very improbable that another instance of the kind should occur just at this time. So he determined to think no more about it, but to lie quietly till the

morning. But of all the enemies of comfortable sleep *an uneasy mind* is the most certain and unappeasable; and so poor Walter found it on this occasion. He *could* not sleep. Therefore, after vainly combating with the enemy till past midnight, he was obliged to yield at last; so, putting on his clothes in the dark, he groped his way as quietly as possible down into the kitchen, and lighted the candle of a lantern at the remains of the wood-fire.

"Now then, if I can but contrive to open this door quietly!" said he to himself, as he carefully drew back the bolts—"if uncle and aunt don't hear me, I'll never tell them a word about it, for perhaps they would laugh at me for what I'm doing. What a dismally dark night! I hope I shan't fall into the moat. But it doesn't rain now, that's one comfort."

Walter crossed the moat by a tolerably wide bridge of planks, which connected the garden with the farm-yard. As he passed over, he held down his lantern to ascertain if the heavy rains had raised the water much above its usual level; for if this were the case, he knew that he should have the pleasure in the morning of opening the flood-gate, in the field at the further end of the moat, and of witnessing the beautiful rush of water. By means of this flood-gate, the moat could be entirely emptied, if necessary.

“Why, the water is *lower* than common, instead of being *higher*!” said Walter to himself, as he kneeled upon the bridge and held down his lantern, as low as he could reach. “I can’t see the water at all! Well, I declare, ’t is every drop of it run out, for there are the three great stones at the bottom that were too heavy to be got up when the mud was cleaned out last winter. How angry uncle will be! It must have been that tiresome boy, Joe, that opened the flood-gate last night, to lower the water, and forgot to shut it again. He had no business to touch it at all, for he knows that is *my* job always. Now I must go into the field and shut it down again. ’T is lucky I came out to-night. But I’ll go and fetch the gin first.”

When Walter reached the barn, he was obliged to crawl on his hands and knees through a long, narrow passage, between sacks of corn, over which some trusses of straw had been placed. At the further end of this cavern, as it may be called, the gin was set; for a drain ran close by, which was a favorite resort of the long-tailed game. Thinking it would be dangerous to take the lantern among such combustible materials, Walter had left it outside, on the floor of the barn; but he soon found the gin in the dark, by feeling about with a short stick, and ascertained that a rat was caught fast by the neck. Then he crawled backwards out of his nar-

row den, and when he raised himself on his feet, to his utter amazement, he was in total darkness!

“What can have happened to the lantern?” said he, feeling about for it with his hands. “I am sure the candle was not nearly burnt out. Perhaps I left the barn-door open, and the wind may have blown it out, for I know one of the sides was broken.”

Here the poor boy's cogitations were interrupted by a violent blow, which beat his hat down over his eyes; and before he could utter a cry, his throat was clasped by a pair of unseen hands so tightly, that the feeling of suffocation, joined to his terror, almost deprived him of his senses. By degrees the terrible hands relaxed a little, but tightened again instantly, when the trembling captive attempted to call for help; and then a low, growling voice, which once heard could never be mistaken, muttered in his ear:

“Hold your tongue, boy, will you? if you make that noise again, I'll twist your head off. What business have you got out here at this time of night, I should like to know? Now listen to me. I have n't half finished the job I came about yet; and if you don't make a noise and disturb the house, perhaps I may n't think it worth while to hurt you; but if you *do* give me any more of your noise, I'll tie you hand and foot and toss you into

the middle of the little bonfire I shall light up presently. Now, come with me, and I'll show you some sport."

Poor Walter was then half led, half dragged out of the barn, into the rick-yard, into a narrow passage between two large haymows, where the ruffian's evil designs were soon made apparent. Holding the boy by the collar with one hand, with the other he opened the door of a dark-lantern, and began to complete the arrangements which Walter's unexpected appearance had interrupted. He had already raised a large heap of fagots in the space between the haymows, and nothing remained to be done but to dispose some gunpowder and brimstone among the straw, at the bottom of the pile, in a way that would insure the rapid communication of the fire to every part of it. The villain seemed to take a pleasure in this part of his work, and muttered to himself as he carefully arranged the materials:

"Now, farmer Trimmer, we shall soon see! So, so, this was the hay that machine helped to make. Very well! people say they have a right to use machines if they like; and *I* have a right to make a bonfire if I like; that's all. Ha! ha! I wonder who will be tired of the sport first. Well, boy, dost understand what these fagots are for?"

Walter understood it all perfectly. Naturally of a very courageous disposition, though, like many

other bold spirits, mild and tractable in his behavior to those he loved, the boy had recovered from his first terrible fright, and he watched the proceedings of his ferocious companion with extraordinary calmness and self-possession. He saw what the villain's intentions were, and he determined to prevent him from carrying them into effect, if possible.

"Uncle has taken care of me," said he to himself, "ever since I was a baby. He never gave me a cross word in all his life. He and aunt have been as kind to me as if I was their own child, and nobody shall ever say that I stood by and saw their property burnt without trying to save it."

Then he said to the incendiary, who still held him fast by the collar, while he completed the arrangement of his combustibles :

"Brindle, if you will only go away quietly without doing any mischief, I promise I'll never tell anybody that I have seen you here, to-night."

The boy's clear, childish voice contrasted strangely with the husky, growling throat of Brindle, who replied :

"Ho ! ho ! my boy, you'll *promise*, will you ? You are a pretty fellow ! you'll promise one minute and tell a lie the next. I'm too cunning a bird to be caught with that sort of nonsense. Now, listen to me : I came fifty miles to do this job, *and I'll finish it* if I was *sure* you would not tell. There,

I think that will do; I shall just put a light to that bit of touchpaper, and then you and I will go up to the top of the hill yonder, and enjoy the blaze. Ha! ha! they won't find much water in the pond to put it out with, I have taken care of that. But mind our agreement, young fellow! If you keep quiet, I'll let you go home again as soon as the mows are well lighted up; and then you may tell your uncle 't was I did the job, and he may catch me if he can. But if you offer to call out before I give leave—you understand me. D'ye see this little bit of a stick? One cry, and it shall be your last!"

The boy heard him in silence, and saw him light the touchpaper, or slowmatch, which appeared long enough to burn for eight or ten minutes. Walter judged that it would last about that time, for he had lately assisted Parsons in the delightful employment of blasting, with gunpowder, some trunks of trees for fire-wood, and he remembered the length of the touchpaper they had used to fire the train, and the time it had burnt before the explosion took place.

"Now, then," said the incendiary, "'t is all safe: we may as well be off to the hill and enjoy the sport at our ease."

"D'ye think the mows will make a good blaze, Brindle?" inquired Walter, quietly.

"A good blaze! Ay, ay; better than ever you saw on Guy Fawkes' night. Come, I see thee art a sensible lad. 'Tis not *thy* fault that the mows are burnt, and so thee art determined to enjoy the sight quietly. Dost love a good bonfire, lad?"

"Yes, sometimes," replied Walter; "we had better go now, had n't we?"

The ruffian, Brindle, though generally cunning and wary as an old fox, was deceived by the boy's quiet and fearless manner; and though he still held him fast, he followed his advice in taking what Walter assured him was a nearer way, across the fields, to the neighboring hill-top, instead of going along the lane. It *was* a nearer way, but that was not Walter's motive for proposing it; for though they would not pass quite so near the house as if they had followed the lane, he knew that they should be on that side in which were the windows of his uncle's, and of all the inhabited bedrooms, except his own.

When they were opposite that side of the house, Walter stopped his companion, and said to him in a whisper:

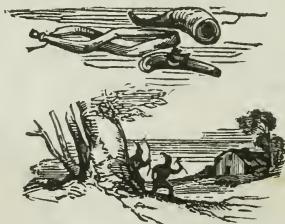
"Brindle, I almost wish now that you would n't burn the mows. I know they will make a fine blaze, but uncle has been kind to me, and the hay is worth a great deal of money. So if you will let me go back and take the fire away, I'll never tell

anybody who put the fagots there, as long as I live. I never told a lie in my life, and I would n't tell a lie to you now, to save all the hay in the country from being burnt."

"Come on," said Brindle," grasping his prisoner's throat, for his suspicions were somewhat aroused. "Come on, directly, and hold your tongue, or I'll strangle you!"

"God be merciful to me, then!" said the boy. Then, with a stout pocket-knife which he had taken out and opened unperceived, he gashed the back of the villain's hand to the bone, and as the pain obliged him to relax his grasp, Walter shouted with all his strength, "Help! help! uncle James! Fire! Help!"

The next instant a heavy blow from the incendiary's bludgeon laid him bleeding and senseless on the ground.



CHAPTER V.

"WHAT noise was that?" said the farmer to his wife; "didst hear a noise, or was I dreaming about it?"

"I dare say thee wast, for I heard nothing. The cock crowing, likely enough."

The farmer thought that it very likely *was* the cock, and he was on the point of closing his sleepy eyes again, when a faint gleam of light shone across the window for an instant.

"Wife, there's a flash of lightning! We are going to have a thunder-storm."

"Oh, then, do get up and shut the shutters, or I shall be frightened to death."

Mr. Trimmer arose to comply with his dame's request; but before he closed the shutters he stood at the window for a little while, waiting for the next flash, that he might see in what quarter the storm was gathering.

"The night is as dark as pitch," said he, opening the window and putting his head out; "but it don't seem like a storm, and I can hear no thunder."

"Now, my good man, do shut the window, for we *shall* have a storm, I am sure. I can smell the lightning already."

"Well, *I* never could smell lightning, though I have heard other people say they could. But I declare, I *can* smell something now, though I've got a bad cold in my head. 'T is like a brimstone match, exactly."

"Yes, that's the sort of smell. I have smelt it fifty times. There, now, do shut the window, and the shutters too, as close as you can."

"*Silence!*" said the farmer, in a half whisper, but in a tone which the practised ears of Mrs. Trimmer understood at once as signifying that he was in earnest, and would be obeyed. After a few seconds, he added, as he began to dress himself in the utmost haste, "Don't be frightened, Mary, but there's mischief abroad! I heard the gate at the end of the Long-patch fall to, as plainly as possible. I am sure of it, for I should know the sound of that gate among a thousand. Directly after I heard somebody running, as if for his life, over the new-laid stones in the lane. There's some villany stirring. Ah! there it is, sure enough. I see the light now! There's a fire somewhere behind the house; but, by the blessing of God, we shall be in time to put it out before it has made much head. So, my good dame, don't be frightened, but get up and call everybody. Villains, I'll be amongst ye in a minute!"

The stout farmer made such a fearful clatter, as

he half ran, half jumped down the uncarpeted stairs, that everybody in the house was thoroughly aroused, long before the trembling Mrs. Trimmer could knock at their doors. I looked into Walter's room, as I passed, to learn the cause of the disturbance, for the poor woman was unable to give me much information on the subject; but she sat on the stairs sobbing and wringing her hands, and exclaiming,

“Ay! I told ye so! I told ye so! The *results of machinery*, indeed! here they are come upon us at last, for we shall all be murdered or burnt alive! I told ye all that something bad would come of it, and nobody would believe me!”

Finding that Walter was not in his room, I went down into the kitchen, and then, through the open door, the cause of the alarm was apparent. A column of dense smoke, illuminated by the fire underneath, was rising up among the mows.

I hastened into the yard, and found Mr. Trimmer and Parsons, with hayforks and rakes, throwing out the blazing straw and fagots from the narrow space where the pile was laid. For some minutes the issue was very doubtful. One of the mows had already kindled, and nothing but the greatest exertions, on the part of the farmer and his trusty foreman, prevented the fire from spreading. However, this was at last accomplished, by tearing down the burning hay with rakes, till at length the danger

was past, and all the flaming materials were collected together in a heap in an open part of the yard.

“Now God be praised for all his mercies!” exclaimed Mr. Trimmer, panting with heat and exertion. “Five minutes later, only five minutes later, and *nothing* could have saved the mows! And if the mows had burnt, the barns, and everything else in the yard, would, most likely, have gone too, with the wind this way. Run in, Parsons, and tell your mistress ’t is all safe. I can’t leave this heap till the flame is gone down a little, for the villains have taken care not to leave us a drop of water to put it out with.”

I asked Mr. Trimmer if he knew where Walter was.

“In the house, I believe, sir,” replied he, “with his aunt. I called out to him as I passed his door, and told him to stay and take care of her, for she is almost out of her senses with fright. But did ye ever see anybody in such a mess as I am, Mr. Ernest?”

I now, for the first time, observed that he was plastered with black mud from head to foot. He said that as he crossed the bridge, he had plunged a milk-pail down hastily, intending to bring it up full of water; but not meeting with the resistance he had expected, he lost his balance and fell over into

the muddy bed of the moat ; and with this most convincing proof that the water had been drawn off, the poor farmer first became aware of the sly trick that had been played him.

Scarcely had we begun to recover a little from our fright, when we were thrown into a fresh consternation, by finding that Walter had not been seen since the alarm of fire was first given. When every part of the premises had been searched without success, and poor Mrs. Trimmer and her maids were uttering lamentable cries of distress, the farmer beckoned me aside.

“ I need n’t ask what you think of this terrible business, sir,” said he ; “ I can see it all in your face, plainly enough. I remember now that I found the kitchen door unbolted. The poor boy must have run out into the yard, before any of us, and the villains have murdered him ! Oh ! if it had pleased God that every stick and straw belonging to me had been burnt to ashes, rather than that boy should have come to harm, I should have been a happy man ! I know I must not complain, *but I loved Walter !* we *all* loved him ; nobody could *help* loving him ! Now I must ride off to the town, to give information to the magistrates ; though what *they* can do, I ’m sure I don’t know.”

I went with Mr. Trimmer into the stable, to hold the lantern for him while he saddled his horse, for

Parsons had been dispatched with the bad tidings to the nearest neighbor. The farmer was already in the saddle, when a piercing shriek of distress reached our ears, from the house.

"They have found him!" said he, hastily dismounting from his horse. "They have found the boy, *and he is dead!*"

As we entered the kitchen, Parsons was endeavoring to comfort his mistress. "He's *not* dead, missis, I am sure; though I'm afraid he's hurt badly enough; but he is'n't dead, for he keeps on groaning and moaning; and that's how 't was I found him as I went across the fields. I did n't like to take him up in my arms, for fear I should hurt him, for perhaps some of his poor bones are broken; but if master likes, we two can carry him easily in this great arm-chair."

When poor Walter was brought into the house, I felt convinced that the terrible wound he had received on his head would prove fatal in a few hours; for he was perfectly insensible, and, though he still breathed, it was in a heavy, laborious manner, and with a sound resembling snoring,—a fearful token that the brain was injured. Mr. Trimmer galloped off for a surgeon, who, when he came, either could not or *would* not give us any consolation; for he was one of those brutal practitioners who disgrace their profession by their rude and

ungentlemanly behavior, and who seem to think that, because a late celebrated surgeon, (the letters of whose name most fortunately can be transposed into "*Johnny the Bear*,") was both *surly* and *skillful*, therefore it is only necessary for them to ape his rough, uncivil manners, to make their patients believe that they possess his talents also. However, this bear, though he would not answer any questions, appeared to take great pains in examining and dressing the poor boy's wound; and when that operation was finished, he condescended to swallow a very potent draught of brandy and water. Thinking that this might have the effect of mollifying his surly temper a little, Mrs. Trimmer ventured to inquire if he thought the boy would recover.

"Recover!" said he, "what in the name of nonsense does the woman mean by asking such a stupid question as that? How can I tell whether the boy will recover or not? D'ye think that his skull is made of *glass*, that I can look into his head and see what's the matter with the brain. The boy has had a terrible blow, I tell you, and *nobody* can say what the consequence may be. Now, my good man, is my horse ready?"

It was more than three weeks before time solved the question, which the surly doctor could not answer. By careful nursing, and, to give the bear

his due, by very skilful surgical treatment, Walter *did* recover, though it was many months before he was restored to his former health and strength. He was incapable of answering any questions for several days after the night of the fire, therefore Brindle had time to escape to a great distance, before it was known that he was the culprit, though his conduct in the hayfield made us strongly suspect that he was concerned in the outrage. But the man's extraordinary malformation of face and body proved his ruin. Having some little talent in drawing likenesses, I made from memory a sketch of the incendiary, which was printed at the head of the handbills offering a reward for his apprehension; and though it certainly did not merit the praise bestowed upon it by Walter, who called it "*a most beautiful likeness of Polyphemus,*" it proved sufficiently correct for the purpose. You might have seen an outline of Brindle's long, straggling limbs and shortened body, posted conspicuously in almost every town and village in the south of England. "'T will find him out!" said the farmer. "We shall catch him, sooner or later, if he is above ground."

It did find him out, though he was *not above ground*; for, after remaining concealed for more than six months, Brindle was at length apprehended, many fathoms beneath the surface, working in a mine in Cornwall. At his trial, Walter was

the principal evidence against him ; but his muttered threat of vengeance in the hayfield was not forgotten. The man had found the means of engaging the services of a lawyer, who did his best for his client, and strove, by a bullying cross-examination, to weaken Walter's testimony. As easily might he have overturned a church, by pushing against it with his shoulder. Confident in truth and innocence, the boy remained firm and undaunted, and the most vexatious and intricate questionings of his adversary could not beguile him into saying a single word *more than the truth* ; consequently he was in no danger of contradicting himself in his answers. I believe the jury had almost decided upon their verdict before the trial was half over, and Brindle was condemned to pass the remainder of his days in banishment.

As I am writing the last pages of this little history, the delicious fragrance of new-made hay, from the adjoining meadow, breathes in through the open window, and reminds me that a year has passed away since the gathering in of the last crop, which, but for Walter's courage and determination, would have been consumed by the revengeful incendiary's torch. Occasionally, as it approaches the house, I can hear the whirring noise of the haymaking machine ; for the farmer, not deterred by the disasters of last year, is again availing himself of the services

of this useful invention. He is even seriously contemplating the erection of a thrashing machine.

“All the incendiary villains in the world,” he says, “shall not frighten me from doing a thing, when I know that it is right and proper to be done. However, we need n’t put ourselves into a fidget about it, for we have heard nothing of these nightly fires for some time, so let us hope that the people are getting wiser or better.”

Brindle’s knock-down argument, although it very nearly deprived Walter of his life, has not altered his opinions in the least. I believe he knows a great part of “The Results of Machinery” by heart; and his uncle often appeals to nephew Walter, when he finds himself likely to be overcome in his discussions with his brother farmers on the subject.

As for my kind hostess, she still calls herself a determined enemy to the use of machinery; though, with great good humor, she soon becomes partially reconciled to any improvements of that nature which her husband introduces. The subject is still frequently discussed by the members of the Trimmer family; but if differences of opinion were always maintained with their moderation and good temper, the world we live in would be a quiet resting-place indeed.



She resembled a butterfly, &c.....p. 59.

VERONICA,

OR THE BENEFITS OF SICKNESS.

LITTLE Veronica had a very lively temper; she was seldom grave, and always in motion. Her brother John was not far wrong in giving her the name of Chatterbox; for she was forever speaking, and never at a loss for something about which to talk, argue, or laugh.

“When I am near Veronica, the chatter-box,” said John, “I am never dull. She talks so much, that the hours seem minutes.” Others made the same remark; and all who wished for diversion were very fond of the society of this little girl.

But the giddiness of Veronica was the cause of much uneasiness to her parents. She now approached the tenth year of her age, and had received but little instruction. Her mother wished to give her a knowledge of female occupations; but her progress was slow, not being able to keep herself quiet for a single instant. She resembled a butterfly sporting about from one flower to another.

"Pay attention, Veronica," her mother would say; "I wish to show you how this is to be knit." For some minutes she gave heed; but soon, her eyes wandering to some other object, she was anything but attentive to what her mother said; and thus committed more than one fault.

"You will never do anything well," said her mother, in a displeased tone; "you are always absent; your thoughts wander here and there; if you wish to learn anything, you must give it your undivided attention, and not leave it until you have perfectly learned it."

Veronica also wanted perseverance; she was seldom seen to finish anything. One day she said to herself, "I wish to knit a pair of gloves for John; I shall present them to him on his birthday; this will give him inexpressible pleasure." She went to her mother, and begged of her to show her immediately how to set about the work; and her mother saw her with astonishment, devote so much attention to it, that in a few minutes she had no further need of her instruction.

But what was the good of it? Scarcely had Veronica worked at the gloves for a quar-

ver of an hour, when she became weary of her occupation ; she commenced making a pair of boots for her cat, which she soon left off to cut a paper tree, for her friend Charlotte ; and scarcely had she finished it, when she began to play with her thimble, then to sing and dance, and thought no more of her sewing or knitting.

She returned several times to her work ; but her giddiness and want of application, prevented her finishing it. John's birthday arrived, Veronica had almost completed the gloves, but half of the thumb and the tops of the fingers were still wanting ; she was in consequence unable to offer her gift.

Their friend Charlotte made John a present of a little pocket-book, which she had made all herself, with which he was highly delighted ; and Veronica then repented not having finished his gloves. Her mother, however, begged her to recollect that it was her thoughtlessness alone that had prevented it.

Veronica was equally careless in what concerned her more serious studies ; she had excellent masters, whose patience she often exhausted, through her want of attention.

John made great progress in his studies, but

Veronica was far behind him: it could not be otherwise; her mind was always distracted; instead of listening to what her master said, she played with her fingers, chattered, thought of the cat, of the picture-books, of her friend Charlotte, of John's dog, and every sort of trifle; if afterwards her master questioned her about what she had been reading, she did not answer, or had perhaps taken it in a wrong sense. Thus it happened that, though in the main good and amiable, Veronica was ill-informed, and wanting in agreeable manners; and it was not without reason that her parents felt annoyed at her thoughtless and giddy conduct, while they used every means to alter it.

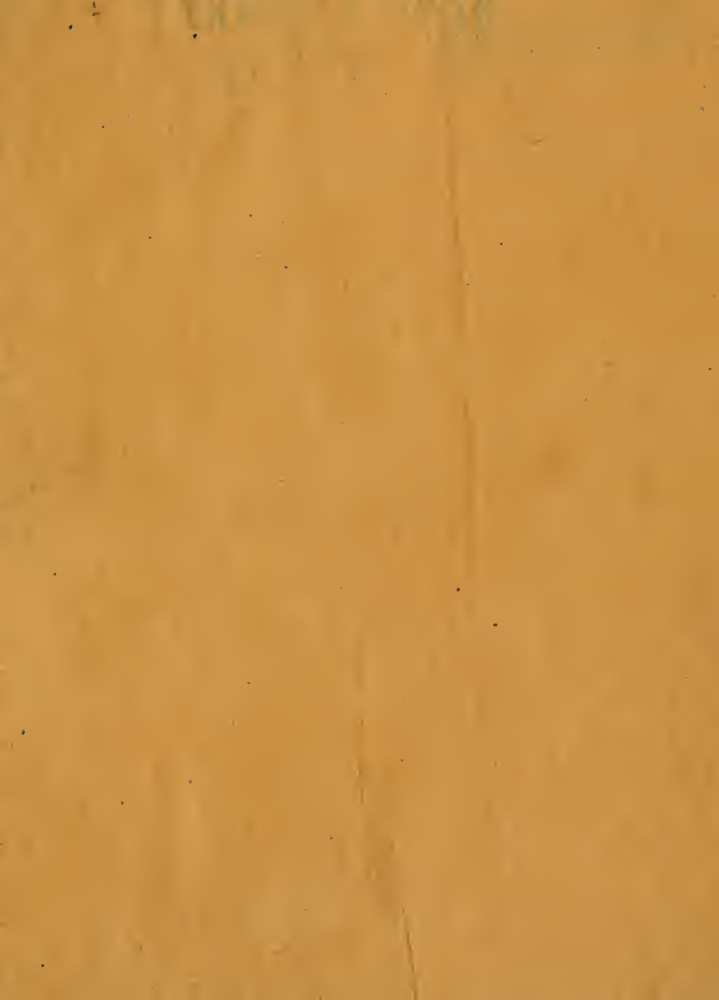
However, what the latter could not succeed in effecting, was brought about by illness. Veronica fell sick; the physicians gave no hope; and her parents, who tenderly loved their daughter, were in despair; when suddenly a favorable alteration took place, and Veronica was restored to life. What joy for her kind parents and her fond brother! her life was spared; but she was obliged to keep her bed for several weeks longer, to recover her strength. This illness had a powerful

effect on her mind, and whole deportment. She became more serious; and, perceiving that she would be confined for some time longer to her bed, she entreated her parents or her brother to read to her on good and useful subjects, to which she paid great attention, and retained nearly all she heard; she also read to herself, and improved considerably.

"If I recover," said she, "I will entirely change my conduct; I will be diligent and industrious."

Veronica kept her good resolutions; her illness completely altered her; she gave her parents entire satisfaction, and was distinguished for her zeal and perseverance, her rational conduct, and ability; and was beloved by every one. She talked less than formerly, but became more thoughtful; she was less fond of play, but much more industrious.

Veronica's father one day addressed his wife, with tears in his eyes: "All that the Lord does is good," said he; "even the ills He sends us tend to our happiness; our daughter would not now be so gentle and amiable, had he not tried her by a painful illness."



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Faithful Walter.